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BOROUGH OF NEW ROMNEY (KENT)

ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND  
OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR FOR THE YEAR 1956.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1956.

The estimate by the Registrar General of the mid-year Home Population was 2,350 i.e. an increase by 10 over that of the previous year.

The number of live births was 31 (17 male and 14 female) which represents a decrease by 8 over that of the previous year and the corresponding crude birth-rate was 13.19; when adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor which is based on a standard population balanced for age and sex distribution and allows equable comparison with other Districts the rate becomes 13.72; this is lower than that of 15.7 for England and Wales, but the figures are too small for statistical comparisons.

There were no still-births which may be regarded as an index of adequate ante-natal supervision and careful obstetric attention.

There was only one infant death due to prematurity, which is the chief cause of infant neo-natal deaths. The infantile mortality rate was 32.26. The Child Welfare Clinic in the Borough provides a valuable service for children under five years of age, its chief objective being to prevent ill-health and to create positive health; the accumulative effect of the unobtrusive work done at these Clinics is reflected in the health of the children of today.

There was no maternal death due to pregnancy, childbirth or abortion. At the beginning of this Century the number of these deaths was comparatively high throughout the Country and remained stationary at four per 1,000 live births until 1936 after which the rate began to fall due to a combination of various factors; for example, the introduction of the Sulphonamides in 1936 and Penicillin in 1941 and other later antibiotics have reduced the morbidity and mortality from Puerperal Sepsis to a minimum; the Midwives Act of 1936 provided a domiciliary service of salaried midwives and more mothers had skilled attention; hospitals provided more specialised services, including an improved blood transfusion service.

The total number of deaths from all causes was 29 (14 male, 15 female) and the crude death-rate was 12.34; when adjusted by the Registrar General's Comparability Factor as for births, the rate becomes 10.73, which is lower than that of 11.7 for England and Wales.

Thirteen of these deaths were due to Heart and Circulatory or Vascular Diseases which are natural causes of death amongst the aged.

Disease of the Coronary Artery of the Heart is however an exception as it claims many victims amongst the middle-aged and has been increasing in morbidity and mortality during the past 25 years. There were three male deaths during the year, the ages being 51, 53 and 63 years. The hypothesis that it may be precipitated by a combination of stress and excessive smoking has many advocates.

Cancer caused the second highest number of deaths i.e. 6. It is not known how many of these lives were prolonged by treatment, but it should be known that the disease can be



completely cured by the greatly improved techniques of modern surgery and radio-therapy, if a reasonably early diagnosis is made. For example, two of these deaths were from Cancer of the Breast which both from the point of view of diagnosis and treatment is one of the most accessible sites in the body.

There was no death from Cancer of the Lung with which the inhalation of tobacco smoke has been associated as a primary or contributory cause. There is no doubt that excessive smoking is harmful to lung tissue and may produce changes in the cells of the lung and bronchi upon which malignancy may become superimposed.

The other causes of death were miscellaneous, amongst which there was no exceptional cause.

There was no death caused by the Infectious Diseases.

An outbreak of Measles occurred, 67 cases having been notified. Outbreaks commonly occur every second year, when there is a sufficient number of susceptible children, and owing to its highly infectious nature and that it is most infectious for several days before the eruption of the typical rash reveals itself to the parents, it spreads rapidly through crowded classrooms. Fortunately, it is not a serious disease by itself, but occasionally its chief complication, Broncho-pneumonia, supervenes, which can be very serious in infants or debilitated children. Treatment, however, by the Antibiotics is invariably specific if given at a reasonably early stage - the danger lies in rapid development of the Pneumonia within 12 to 24 hours to an advanced stage. There is no effective means of prevention, excepting by the use of Gamma Globulin, which would confer temporary passive immunity; it is neither practicable nor advisable to use this on a large scale, but it is used occasionally for temporarily immunising children suffering from some other serious illness who have been exposed to Measles within five days. Gamma Globulin is available at the Public Health Laboratory, Preston Hall.

Only five cases of Whooping Cough were notified. Outbreaks occur when there is a sufficient number of susceptible children as with Measles, and also it is most highly infectious for about seven days before the typical whoop or paroxysm reveals the nature of the disease to the parents who often allow their children to attend school during this period, thus disseminating the infection throughout the classrooms. Also, as with Measles, its most dangerous complication is Broncho-pneumonia, particularly in infants a few weeks or months old who may become rapidly asphyxiated. The earlier treatment is instituted by the Antibiotics the greater is the child's chance of recovery. There is solid reason for optimism that the modern vaccines will confer adequate immunity and these will be made available in 1957 - 58 at the County Child Welfare Clinic in addition to these already available for inoculation by the family Doctor.

Six cases of sporadic mild Scarlet Fever were notified. In its present phase, this disease is mild compared with its former virulence and the majority of cases are nursed at home when conditions there are satisfactory. At present, the complication most seen is Otitis Media. Occasionally types iv and xii of the organism cause Acute Nephritis. Treatment by the Sulphonamides and/or Antibiotics is invariably specific and these have largely replaced the use of antitoxin. In the field of prevention, it is a wise precaution to take swabs from the nose and throat of any school-child who has been suffering from the illness before he is allowed to return to school, as profuse convalescent carriers usually are a source of infection; nasal immune carriers are also commonly involved in outbreaks at school.

Seventeen cases of Acute Primary Pneumonia were notified. As secondary Pneumonias are not notifiable, the total number of cases of Pneumonia is not known. There was only one death,



which reflects the success of modern treatment by chemo-therapy. Before the introduction in 1936 of the Sulphonamides and later of the Antibiotics, there was no specific treatment, and the disease was then a major cause of deaths.

There were no other cases of Infectious Disease in the Borough during the year.

The infectious diseases caused by Viruses now constitute a greater problem than those caused by bacteria.

Poliomyelitis is the most formidable of these virus diseases, but there are firm grounds for optimism that the British vaccine which is extremely safe will effectively prevent the onset of paralysis in those immunised.

Probably the next most formidable virus is that of Influenza which can cause wide-spread winter epidemics. Vaccines are now also being manufactured which it is hoped will prevent the onset of the disease.

Other viruses cause illness in the central nervous system, for example, Benign Aseptic Meningitis which clinically may resemble non-paralytic Poliomyelitis. Others attack the respiratory system causing atypical Pneumonias, Laryngo-tracheo-bronchitis, and throat and nose infections with febrile catarrh. Although these diseases per se are not usually dangerous to life, they cause much absenteeism from school and employment.

A Virological Service has been established within the Public Health Laboratory Service to study these viruses.

Regarding Tuberculosis, two new cases of the Respiratory type were notified, but the source of infection is unknown; there is no reservoir of infection in the Borough. The Chest Physician for the area is responsible for the ascertainment, the arrangements for treatment and the investigation of human sources of infection, including the examination of contacts. From the aspect of prevention, improved Hospital facilities e.g. for X-ray examination, and the Mass Radiography Service are invaluable in detecting early or latent, or unsuspected cases who would have become open sources of infection to others. Notable progress has also been made in the field of treatment and if cases are diagnosed reasonably early, they can be completely cured; if diagnosed late, and the disease is advanced, life can be considerably prolonged. The disease is being gradually eradicated and may become a rarity by the end of the Century.

There were no new cases of the non-respiratory type which is an index of the safety of the milk supplies of the Borough. However close supervision of milk supplies and of meat in slaughterhouses is still a very essential safeguard.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your interest and assistance in the work of the Department and the staff for their efficient co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. MARSHALL

M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

FOR 1956

Area:- 1,509 acres

Registrar-General's Estimate of:-

The Resident Population	...	...	...	...	2,350
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Number of Inhabited Houses According to the Rate Books	...	...	...	...	988
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Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£37,795
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Sum represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£145
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Social Conditions

The ancient and historical Cinque Port Borough of New Romney, is today predominantly an Agricultural District. There are also within the Borough, the workshops of the Romney, Hythe, Dymchurch Light Railway and a few small factories. Part of the boundary is formed by the sea at Littlestone where there are wide expanses of sand which attract many summer visitors and holiday-makers. There is almost no unemployment, if any, and social conditions may generally be regarded as being satisfactory.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

		<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>		<u>New Romney Borough</u>	<u>England and Wales</u>
1.	Live Births	31	17	14	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	13.19	15.7
	(a) Legitimate	30	16	14			
	(b) Illegitimate	1	1	-			
2.	Stillbirths	-	-	-	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	-	23.0
	(a) Legitimate	-	-	-			
	(b) Illegitimate	-	-	-			
3.	Deaths	29	14	15	Death rate per 1,000 resident population	12.34	11.7
4.	Deaths from Pregnancy, Child- birth & Abortion.	-	-	-	Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births.	-	Not Available
5.	Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age.	1	-	1			
	(a) Legitimate	1	-	1			
	(b) Illegitimate	-	-	-			
	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	...	...	...		32.26	23.8
	Rate re legitimate infants	...	...	...		33.33	
	Rate re illegitimate	...	...	...		-	
6.	Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...		6	
	Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...		-	
	Deaths from Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	...	...	...		1	
	Deaths from Measles	...	...	...		-	

The following cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year 1956.

Acute Primary or Influenzal Pneumonia	...	17
Whooping Cough	...	5
Measles	...	67
Scarlet Fever	...	6



CAUSES OF DEATH IN NEW ROMNEY BOROUGH

DURING 1956

				<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
ALL CAUSES				14	15
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	-	-
2.	Tuberculosis, other	...	...	-	-
3.	Syphilitic disease	...	...	-	-
4.	Diphtheria	...	...	-	-
5.	Whooping Cough	...	...	-	-
6.	Meningococcal infections	...	...	-	-
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	-	-
8.	Measles	...	...	-	-
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	-	-
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	...	...	1	-
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	...	...	-	-
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	...	...	-	2
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	...	...	-	-
14.	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	...	...	2	1
15.	Leukaemia, aleukaemia	...	...	-	-
16.	Diabetes	...	...	-	-
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	1	2
18.	Coronary disease, angina	...	...	3	-
19.	Hypertension with heart disease...	...	...	1	-
20.	Other heart disease	...	...	3	3
21.	Other circulatory disease	...	...	-	-
22.	Influenza	...	...	-	-
23.	Pneumonia	...	...	-	1
24.	Bronchitis	...	...	3	-
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	...	...	-	-
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	-	1
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	...	...	-	1
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	-	-
29.	Hypertrophy of prostate	...	...	-	-
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion...	...	...	-	-
31.	Congenital malformations	...	...	-	-
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	...	...	-	4
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	-	-
34.	All other accidents	...	...	-	-
35.	Suicide	...	...	-	-
36.	Homicide and operations of war	...	...	-	-



# Immunisation against Diphtheria, 1956

The following is a return of the number of children under the age of 15 years on 31st December, 1956, who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1942).

Year of Birth	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	Total
Last complete course of injections (whether primary or booster) 1952 - 1956	6	27	27	14	18	38	52	41	12	53	30	29	29	29	6	441
1951 or earlier	23	9	6	16	21	4	5	12	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	99

# Immunisation against Diphtheria, and Vaccination against Smallpox, 1956

The following is a return of (A) the number of children who were immunised against Diphtheria and (B) the number of persons who were vaccinated against Smallpox, during the year ended 31st December, 1956.

## (A) Diphtheria Immunisation

Year of Birth	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	Total
Primary Inoculations	6	21	5	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	36
Re-inforcing Inoculations	-	-	-	-	1	34	8	-	9	3	-	-	-	-	1	56

## (B) Vaccination

	14	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Before 1942
Primary Vaccination	14	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Re-Vaccination	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	10

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality, 1956

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths				Total cases on Register			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	1	-
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 and upwards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

There were no deaths from Tuberculosis of patients who had not been notified as suffering from that disease.



SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Housing

(a)	Number of new houses erected	...	...	...	5
(b)	Number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts	...	...	...	25
	Number of houses found to be in any respect unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	6
	Number of houses found to be unfit for human habitation and incapable of repair at reasonable expense	...	...	...	-
	Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied by informal action	...	...	...	2
	Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	...	...	...	-
	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made	...	...	...	2
	Number of houses demolished	...	...	...	-
	Number of houses closed	...	...	...	1
	Number of houses closed in pursuance of an undertaking given under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936.	...	...	...	-
	Number of dwelling houses reconditioned and undertakings cancelled	...	...	...	-
(c)	Improvement Grant Applications	...	...	...	9
	Improvement Grants Approved	...	...	...	4
	Improvement Works Done	...	...	...	-
	Cost of approved Improvement Works	...	...	...	51,115
	Total amount of Improvement grant allocated	...	...	...	2400

Water Supply

Piped water is supplied by the Folkestone and District Water Company from shallow wells in the beach shingle of Dungeness peninsular. The water is chlorinated at source.

No shortage of water was experienced.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

382 premises in the Borough are connected to main drainage including the County Modern School with 400 day pupils on the register. In addition a site for 135 holiday caravans has main drainage facilities connected to the Council's system.

Surface flooding occurs in winter in that part of Greatstone within the Borough, due to the inadequacy of the tide locked gravity sea outfall but the Corporation have signified their willingness to assist the Rivers Board financially in the provision of a pumping station in view of the fact that some of the surface water emanates from their sewage treatment works.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

No change in this service occurred during the year. One

7 cubic yard side loader vehicle with two men is normally engaged wholetime with additional labour in the holiday season as required.

Disposal is by tipping in water filled pits on land owned by the Corporation.

#### Salvage

Waste paper is collected, sorted and baled. The income from sales totalled £103 for the period ended 31st March, 1957 an increase of £43 over the previous financial year.

#### Cesspool Emptying

One 800 gallon suction tanker was engaged wholetime on emptying of cesspools and septic tanks at 551 properties.

#### Rodent Control

One part-time rodent operative carries out inspections and treatments as required.

#### Food Control and Hygiene

As time permits the survey of food premises continues; the provisions of the Food Hygiene Regulations 1955 was explained to proprietors and compliance with the Regulations required.

The number and type of such premises are as follows:-

Retail shops selling foodstuffs	-	21
Restaurants and Snack Bars	-	6
Registered Dairies	-	2
Shops and stalls registered for sale of ice cream	-	18
Licensed Slaughterhouses	-	2

One of the two slaughterhouses was not used during the year under review.

15 sheep and lambs and 1 pig were recorded as being slaughtered and inspected. No significant disease or condition was detected.

From time to time voluntary surrender of unsound foodstuffs was dealt with, mainly canned goods.

#### Factories

Eight inspections were made to the 14 permanent factories on the register.





